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ABSTRACT

The Adult Learner Project was a two-phase program in which a total of 10 community-level projects received funding to develop collaborative agendas that would meet the learning needs of adults in their respective communities. During the second phase of the project, the following community-level collaborative councils were also given $20,000 each: the Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council, serving the greater Phoenix area; the Career Development Council, serving the tricounty rural-industrial area around Corning and Elmira, New York; the Industry-Education Council of Contra Costa County, serving an area east of San Francisco Bay; San Mateo County Industry Education Council, serving the area surrounding San Francisco International Airport; and the Metropolitan Washington Work-Education Council, serving jurisdictions in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. This time, however, grant recipients concentrated on the following areas: expanding adult learning through employment-based tuition aid programs, meeting learning needs of older and retired workers, and improving linkages between vocational-technical programs and economic development efforts. The projects demonstrated that most communities are rich in resources and opportunities to address adult learner issues and that these resources can be linked and tapped. Although communities tend to profess commitments to adult learner issues and support educational institutions, they tend to undervalue neutral third-party efforts to create institutional linkages. (MN)

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TOWARD LOCAL COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

FINAL REPORT OF THE ADULT LEARNER PROJECT

Gerard G. Gold

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I. LOCAL COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS FOR ADULT LEARNERS: QUESTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Working adults—whether professionals, tradespeople, or non-professional workers--frequently have insufficient information to make wise decisions when planning their careers. Can working adults do a better job of identifying the knowledge, skills, and experiences genuinely needed by themselves and their employers when choosing personal career goals and actions?

- Industrial workers, for a century the heart of the nation's workforce, feel threatened by economic changes for which their skills and experiences have not prepared them. Are there constructive ways for "at risk" but still employed industrial workers to confront their occupational vulnerability without undermining productivity, morale, and their own livelihoods?

- College education, as important as ever for career flexibility, self-pride, occupational skill preparation, and initiation into broader cultural values and traditions, is again becoming difficult to finance. Can high school graduates and young adults who may have started but not completed postsecondary education programs create alternative paths to learning, credentials, and careers through better uses of employment-based educational programs, including tuition assistance?

- The problems of underemployment and economic insecurity also affect older workers and so-called "retirees" who lack the financial means to retire with the standard of living they had hoped for or who simply prefer work to the unwelcome pressures of relaxation. Are there better ways to treat older workers? Can new patterns of career transitions better provide income, self-respect, and productive lives for the nation's fast growing "elder" population?

- With all our sophistication, wealth, and respect for problem-solving, we are still just learning how to cut across institutional barriers and reduce "turf" consciousness. Will the need for more timely responses to technological and economic change force us to do a better job of linking education, training, and work institutions?

Questions and issues such as these shape the lives of individuals and organizations across the nation. More to the point, however, is the matter of who takes the responsibility to ask such questions, raise such issues, and seek solutions to the problems inherent in these questions:

- Where are the advocates?

- Who persuades others to pay attention, to understand how problems affecting one group affect the community as a whole and even the narrower self-interests of other groups?

- Who organizes responses that include fact-finding, analysis, prioritizing, solution planning, allocation of funds and in-kind resources?
- Who vigilantly follows the action to assure accountability?

In sum, who cares and who follows through?

The Context for a Network of Adult Learner Projects

In mid-1982 the National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) received a two-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to implement the second phase of NIWL's Adult Learner Project. The Institute is a private, non-profit policy and program research and development organization in Washington, D.C. During the past decade it has advocated and demonstrated the importance of "community collaboration" as an effective method of addressing basic education, training, career development, and labor force transition issues facing local institutional leaders.

From 1980 to 1982, in the first phase of the Adult Learner Project, NIWL, supported by Kellogg funds, was the catalyst for five community level projects to develop collaborative agendas meeting the learning needs of adults in their respective communities. During the 1980-82 period local collaborative work-education councils or industry-education-labor councils in Charleston, South Carolina, Worcester, Massachusetts, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Oakland, California, and Portland, Oregon each received a $20,000 grant to support project activities during an 18-month period. Each council took on the responsibilities of assessing needs of a targeted adult learner population, developing an agenda of activities and resources to meet those needs, and, where possible, organizing initial steps toward implementation.*

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* For a description of these projects see Stephanie Lang Barton, Serving Adult Learners, NIWL, 1982. For an orientation to local collaborative councils, see Gerard G. Gold et al, Industry-Education-Labor Collaboration: Policies and Practices in Perspective, NIWL, 1982.

From 1982 to mid-1984 five different collaborative councils in five other communities participated in the second phase of the Adult Learner Project. A competitive proposal process was again used. There were over 20 applicants. The final five councils were:

- Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council, serving the greater Phoenix, Arizona, area
- Career Development Council, serving the tri-county rural-industrial area around Corning and Elmira, New York
- Industry-Education Council of Contra Costa County, serving a rapidly changing county east of San Francisco Bay in California
- San Mateo County Industry Education Council, serving the area surrounding San Francisco International Airport in the southwest Bay area
- Metropolitan Washington Work-Education Council, serving several counties and jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia as well as the District of Columbia.

These five councils also each received $20,000 each for their 18-month projects. They followed somewhat different project guidelines than councils in the first phase. This second group was asked to select a preferred emphasis from among three topics:

- Expanding adult learning through employment-based tuition aid programs
- Meeting learning needs of older workers and "retired" workers
- Improving linkages between vocational-technical programs and economic development efforts.

These councils too would be assessing needs and formulating local agendas. But by virtue of work previously accomplished or because of the specificity of their project topics, it was expected that they would also be able to move quickly to action implementation.

Guiding Assumptions and Expectations

A set of common assumptions guided the activities of local councils in both phases of the Adult Learner Project. NIWL assumed:

- That substantial resources already exist in most communities to deal with adult learner problems. These resources may lie hidden in various guises and "pockets," but they are there.
- That unmasking, unfreezing, and unlocking these resources requires three basic weapons: information, ideas, and leadership.
- That although adult learner issues are generally recognized as significant, these are still emerging issues. As issues affecting resource allocation decisions, these issues are not well established in institutions and are hidden from the attention spans of institutional leaders.
- That some kind of catalytic "triggering" agent is needed to bring information, ideas, and leadership together in ways which will generate local recognition, resources and responses appropriate to adult learner problems.
- That small investments of foundation funds would be needed to support the local staff work which in turn would trigger local leaders to allocate in-kind and other resources addressing adult learner issues.

These assumptions led to the hypothesis that local collaborative councils dealing with education-work issues represent networks of employers, educators, and other community leaders that can serve efficiently as catalysts for community action. These councils, of greatly varying qualities and operating under many different names, can be found in many communities throughout the nation.

Small-scale funding was chosen consciously despite the risk of achieving only small scale results. Kellogg and NIWL recognized that large investments of funds in a few major projects would certainly generate applicant interest. A heavily funded project might very well achieve notable results in improving services to adult learners. But major funding would have the negative effect of making replication in other communities difficult if not impossible simply by the unusual scale of funding.

Among any number of other claims on the public purse, adult learner programs should not be seen as competing with existing education, training, and social services programs. Nor would most employers and unions readily fund new programs. The trick was to reveal the opportunities and resources for adults already contained in existing programs and to develop local constituencies for adult learning.

- For us the problem was this: what could be done in reasonably typical communities that others could also do if only they could put together a reasonable mix of information, ideas, and leadership?

What Can $20,000 Buy?

It was feared that $20,000 per council over an 18-month period might be insufficient to purchase anything useful. On the other hand, $20,000 seemed realistically close to the amount of funds that a community leadership group might be able to raise locally from corporations and small local foundations if they tried seriously to attempt a similar type of project.

Clearly the project started from a position of substantial risk. The limited funding could barely purchase a full time secretary, much less a full time project director. It was expected that council staff would work on the project on a part-time basis. How much of a total project effort could it support? What level of project activity could be expected? What reasonable outcomes might result?

In weighing these considerations, NIWL placed great emphasis on the concepts of collaboration and leverage. Collaboration meant the sharing of responsibility for agenda development and implementation among business, education, labor, and other community leaders. Leverage implied the ability of these leaders to use the project and its limited but catalytic funding as a focal point around which other resources could be gathered, much as an oyster gathers a pearl around a tiny core until something of real value is created.

Proposals were judged not only on the merits of particular ideas but also on the evidence provided that other community organizations were already interested in those ideas and prepared to work with the local council in developing them.

Collaboration, Adult Learners, and the "Use Gap"

Everyone has heard a politician, corporate executive, or commencement speaker announce, inevitably with conviction, that "people are this nation's (or company's) most important resource."

Ego aside, it is a rare person who can hear these assertions without a twinge of suspicion and doubt. If people are so important, why do we keep replacing them with machines?

Developing coal, corn, ideas, people or any other resource takes time and energy and will power. This nation's abundance of schools, colleges, magazines, television shows, and other media and institutions suggests that we do pay substantial attention to developing our human resources.

Nonetheless, a clear gap can be found between the oft-heard "most important resource" rhetoric and our earlier questions of who cares and who follows through. This is the "use gap", the gap between how people's talents and energies could be employed in productive, creative ways and how those human talents and energies are actually employed.

A useful way to understand the activities of the local collaborative councils in NIWL's Adult Learner Project is to say that these projects all tried to make people more aware of the use gap and do something to narrow the distance. These projects look beyond the rhetoric to the realities.

Could it be that human resource problems are not as important as they sometimes appear to be to some people? Why are obvious concerns such as illiteracy, youth and minority unemployment, work skill obsolescence and other problems tolerated not just by the nation at large but by the people who have the

problems? We are a wealthy nation, the expertise to take action is available, many good ideas and good practices have been demonstrated over the years, many people say they care. But the misuses and non-uses of human resources persist. What is the problem?

What These Projects Teach Us About Local Networks

The local projects of the Adult Learner Project, both in their achievements and their weaknesses teach one emphatic lesson: the need for persistent, sensitive organization and leadership that connects institutional interests on specific people issues. Doing this is not easy. Doing this is not always as pleasant as the rhetoric of collaboration would have others believe. But without persistent advocacy and development, change becomes a matter of either crisis intervention or individual whim.

The projects also teach us that collaborative councils can be essential mechanisms for providing leadership on human resource issues at the community level. The collaborative process, that is, how relationships between organizations are nurtured, may be done well or poorly. In fact, the nurturing of the collaborative council may be as difficult and as important to project success as the performance of the specific project tasks. Task and process are the chicken-egg problem of collaboration.*

The projects show that most communities are rich in resources and opportunities to address adult learner issues. These resources can be linked and tapped. But local characteristics, "cultures", and inter-organizational politics

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* For a detailed discussion of collaborative council organization and process see Max Elsman, Industry-Education-Labor Collaboration: An Action Guide For Collaborative Councils, NIWL, 1981.

create unique situations changing the conditions for success. These idiosyncracies can arise at any point: during the initial stages of project design, during project development and implementation, or at the point of reaching closure and setting the stage for next steps.

Finally, the projects show that communities tend to profess commitments to adult learner issues, tend to display those commitments through support for education institutions, but tend to undervalue "neutral" third party efforts to create institutional linkages.

Moreover, collaborative approaches to adult learner needs remain a matter for determined innovation rather than a matter of standard procedure. Adult development - ranging from young adults entering the workforce to older adults entering their retirement years - remains largely a matter of individual concern with only sporadic institutional involvement.

In such an environment it ought not be surprising that collaborative councils remain underfunded, insecure, and pioneer organizations. These councils' reliance on volunteers and voluntary contributions is a major part of their strength. But the tendency to underpay and overwork dedicated staff is a major weakness affecting the sustainability of projects and the councils themselves.

II. THE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Contra Costa County, California

Contra Costa County lies east of San Francisco Bay, stretching along the lowlands north and east of Berkeley and Oakland. Like much of the Bay Area, it is undergoing rapid economic development. An older economy based on agriculture and some heavy industry is being replaced with a more diverse, service-centered economy of corporate headquarters and offices, finance and business services, and technology-based enterprises.

The Industry Education Council (IEC) of Contra Costa County, based in the city of Pleasant Hill, saw the need and opportunity for more efficient and supportive human resource development practices to help employers and employees cope with this rapid growth. With their 18-month grant from the NIWL Adult Learner Project, the IEC sought to accomplish two purposes: (1) to strengthen employee productivity through improved use of employment-based tuition assistance programs, and (2) to improve contacts and communications between employers and educators, especially area postsecondary educators.

The Council was especially interested in exploring whether and how employer tuition assistance (TA) programs could be used to help young adults build new careers and work toward their educational goals more efficiently than is normally the case. Employer TA programs can pay college tuitions and fees at a time when the new employee can also benefit from employer guidance and career development assistance. High school graduates, generally unaware that many employers offer these opportunities, do not seek out such employers when job-hunting.

Pre-project inquiries to area employers, unions, and education institutions revealed broad-based interest and support for the project. Leading employers had well-established TA programs and were anxious to improve employee competencies while reducing turnover. Likewise, area unions were enthusiastic about "any program that will help motivate employees and potential employees to be more productive" and qualify for promotions and job up-grading.

Tuition assistance was an entirely new topic of discussion and research in Contra Costa County, as it would be in many parts of the country. Thus the first task of the IEC's project was to survey county employers in order to establish a data base. The results of this survey of 72 area companies were encouraging: 60 percent offered tuition assistance, comparable to national data on large and medium-sized companies. While employee participation rates overall were low

(about 3 percent), the participation rate among smaller companies (under 500 employees) was a healthy 9 percent. Moreover, participation was spread almost evenly among exempt managerial and professional staff (54 percent) and non-exempt clerical and non-clerical staff (46 percent). Other information regarding plan characteristics, objectives, and perceived impact was also collected.

This survey, completed in April 1983, was the basis for subsequent IEC project activities. These were primarily:

- o A conference on tuition aid programs and industry-education-labor collaboration generally,
- o A more detailed follow-up survey of six companies' experiences with TA program participants,
- o Publication of a Tuition Aid Directory incorporating information about TA programs at specific Contra Costa County companies. The Directory was distributed to all County high schools, adult schools, and colleges with the intention of increasing counselor and student awareness of these resources for continuing education, and
- o Publication of a matrix displaying all training agencies in the county and the types of training offered.

Participants at the project meetings felt a focus on tuition assistance was too narrow. Other issues affecting employee education and career development supplemented the discussions.

Further information dissemination steps were taken through IEC newsletters and workshops as well as in response to direct requests for information. Unfortunately, plans to use career information workshops as a way to introduce high school students to employer TA programs were cut short when the state of California did not renew funding for the IEC's workshop project.

Results

Follow-up research with 31 companies by the IEC staff documented the following consequences of what was essentially an information gathering and dissemination project:

- Four of 31 companies contacted had increased the amounts of TA funding provided.
- One company switched from a reimbursement policy to a policy of direct payment to the education institution upon enrollment.
- One company increased in-house publicity for the TA program.
- Over half (17) of the companies welcomed the improved information they had received about TA programs generally and among Contra Costa employers.
- Others indicated improved contacts with higher education personnel (10), improved understanding of quality TA plans (6), and increased interest in reviewing internal operations of the TA plan.

All these activities—the surveys, workshops, and publications—appear to have been well received by local business, labor, and education leaders. Thus the project served the Council well in helping to meet the second, more generic, objective of improving the IEC's stature and contacts in the community.

From a starting point as a relatively young council totally identified as a developer of career awareness projects aimed at high school students, the Council had broadened its membership base substantially and established its credentials as an organization concerned with adult as well as youth education-work issues. Members from the local area education, business, and labor sectors are more actively involved in Council activities. Ties were strengthened particularly with the higher education sector, including Contra Costa Community College District, California State University of Hayward, and John F. Kennedy University.

Who Is The Contra Costa IEC?

Organized in 1980 as a local affiliate of the Industry Education Council of California, the IEC of Contra Costa County has the broad mission of establishing cooperative projects which enhance education programs, employee development, and individual career information, awareness, and experience. To achieve these purposes the Council seeks the membership and involvement of area business, industry, labor, education, government, and community agency leaders.

An IECC-chartered local council, the Contra Costa IEC is non-profit with a 25-person board of directors and an executive committee, both representative of the education and employment sectors. The Council's budget varies from year to year depending on project contract and grant funding from government agencies, foundations, and other agencies. Membership dues provide a small core budget for part-time staff and basic organizational expenses.

The Contra Costa IEC's activities in its first four years included:

- Publishing bi-monthly newsletters on local school-business projects
- Conducting two-week summer workshops designed to help teachers learn more about businesses
- Providing JOB Readiness Workshops for high school seniors and occupational training students
- Providing job placement assistance for students completing the workshops
- Providing career counseling and assistance to disabled students and their families and teachers
- Helping schools and employers to review job requirements and educational preparation to improve curricula
- Organizing a clearinghouse on employer and employment and training resources available to assist school teachers in Contra Costa.

The Employment-Based Tuition Aid Project was a departure from the earlier emphasis on high school students in its focus on employer practices. But by aiming its messages at in-school youth (seen as young adults entering the labor market), the IEC was able to maintain a fairly direct link between its membership's primary concern for secondary education and the purposes of the Adult Learner Project.

Corning-Elmira Area, New York

The primary goal of the Worker Retraining Project in the Corning-Elmira area of south-central New York State was to assist "at risk" blue collar workers to become more aware of ways to reduce the risks of long term unemployment through

advanced career planning and training. Part of northern Appalachia with a mixed agricultural and heavy industry economy, the Corning-Elmira area has experienced a long, steady decline in employment as some plants closed and others were renovated. Higher capital investment in surviving plants meant smaller workforces. Unemployment rates were persistently among the highest in the state. Population in the three-county area is about 240,000.

The Career Development Council (CDC), organized in 1975, had played a pioneer role introducing career education ideas and activities to local school districts, organizing business support for youth transition activities and assisting employers, unions, and education institutions to better understand the relationships between economic development, career planning, and retraining.

While preparing the project proposal, CDC staff interviewed more than 40 supervisors, union leaders, trainers, and other persons in routine contact with industrial workers. All recognized both the seriousness of the "at risk" situation facing industrial workers and, in contrast, the strong resistances in companies, unions, and in the minds of the workers themselves to an acknowledgment of these risks. On the one hand, none of the surveyed employers was planning individualized retraining programs. On the other hand, all indicated an interest in using any materials CDC might develop.

Thus the project's modestly-funded efforts seemed to be directed against a target at once formidably defended yet apparently penetrable if the proper approach were taken. Gaining the attention and then the support of area leaders for CDC activities would be difficult. Persuading these leaders and their organizations to take positive, collaborative initiatives of their own would be more difficult.

The results of the Career Development Council's Worker Retraining Project might appear roughly in proportion to the modest resources invested: (1) a well-

attended workshop at which changing labor force requirements were discussed; (2) publication of a guide to area adult education, training, career information and counselling resources based on a project survey of organizations in the tri-county area; (3) the establishment of a career information center in the Corning Public Library; and (4) the development of a proposal to establish a three-county career training information and referral system. The proposal was submitted to the area's Private Industry Council.

With unemployment so high in the Corning-Elmira area it was understandable that discussions and concerns would gravitate toward the needs of unemployed workers. Focusing attention on the needs of at risk but still employed workers (with the implication of needed changes in corporate and union practices) was more difficult to understand and more challenging in terms of both discussion and action.

Harder to measure are less tangible project results, the seeds of ideas, relationships, and responsibilities planted by project activities. Depending on what steps are taken by the Council over the next few years it may be crucially important that: (1) the Council's project leadership led to a 50 percent increase in business membership (from 15 to 22), that (2) additional local school districts decided to fund CDC secondary-level programs, or that (3) business, education, and labor leaders commended CDC's efforts and look to CDC for next steps.

Who Is the Career Development Council?

During 1983-84 the budget of the Career Development Council was provided by area school districts (50 percent), businesses (30 percent), and contracts and grants (20 percent). A staff of eight persons, some working part time, implemented the Council's primary agenda of youth career development projects and the Kellogg-NIWL Adult Learner Project. The Council is governed by a 19-member Board of Directors.

CDC is one of the older, path-breaking community-based collaborative education-work councils in the nation. Its history can be traced to 1974 when a group of local employers, school superintendents, and union leaders decided to improve career development opportunities for youth and adults. Crucial to the Council's early years were federal government funds voluntarily matched by the Corning Glass Works Foundation, Corning Community College, Ingersoll Rand Corporation and several other employers and local school systems. Federal vocational education monies and a five-year demonstration project funded by the federally-chartered Appalachian Regional Commission enabled the Council to establish itself as a force for progressive change in education and training practices in the tri-county area. These successful early projects emphasized employer involvement in identification of training needs and youth career preparation programs and led to the Council's incorporation in 1977 as a non-profit corporation.

Local schools and businesses have supported CDC activities through membership dues since 1975. Dependence on local funding since the conclusion of the Appalachian Regional Commission grant has meant a smaller budget with consequent smaller staff and less ambitious projects. The main thrusts of CDC activities in recent years have been:

- As a resource to area schools and colleges: staff development workshops, site visits, and courses for faculty; consultant and advisory assistance; coordination of classroom speakers, work site visits, and other career-related uses of employer resources.
- As a networker of business-education-labor interests: development and coordination of regional business-education committees and task forces addressing specific problems and opening communications among diverse community leaders.
- As an innovator: computerized high school resume project; Parent-Employer Connnections project for junior high school students; coordination of cooperative education, internship, and field study placements; needs assessments of community human resource and economic development problems, surveys of area organizations, initiator of specific projects.

- As a publisher: the 1981 and 1982 editions of Career Planning Guide for youth and adults was distributed throughout "Southern Tier" communities of central New York. In 1985 CDC will be funded to distribute 60,000 copies of the Guide. Other publications provide current, realistic information on careers and local sources of career information and counseling.

Phoenix Metropolitan Area, Arizona

Project Overview

People made the difference in Phoenix. An intensive collaborative effort cut across the "turfs" of eleven companies, one public employer, and the seven community colleges of the Maricopa Community College District. Together, key training and human resource development department representatives prepared and tested a new career development training program for working adults. The training program is now published as the Career Advancement Project, and known locally as CAP.

Books, courses, and workshops on career development are everywhere these days. The differences made in Phoenix are three-fold.

First, the Career Advancement Project is perceived by Phoenix employers as a better mousetrap in the career workshop game because it incorporates the employer perspective, as well as those of the employee or job-seeker. CAP was created by and for some of Phoenix's most important employers. Their purpose: to help their employees make the most of in-house career opportunities and of the employees' own abilities and interests. Their assumption: enhancing organizational effectiveness and productivity requires individual employees who understand how to use the "system," that is, how to find and use career advancement opportunities both inside and outside specific firms. Behind this assumption lies another: that individual motivation and initiative is the key element in building product quality, operational problem-solving, and overall competitiveness into the spirit and style of organizations.

Second, CAP resulted from a collaborative committee effort that worked. Needs, experiences, and insights that very well might have been treated with proprietary closeness were shared among competitors. These were companies competing for many of the same talented people in the Phoenix labor market. Area colleges which compete at times with in-house career counseling programs as providers of counseling services also participated.

Third, the project was itself the creation of a small, energetic, network-building, non-profit community-based organization, the Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council, Inc. (ABIEC).

ABIEC is a "neutral broker" organization with a dedicated interest in collaboration on education-work issues. The fact that the project initiative came from such an organization gave credibility not only to the topic of adult career development but, equally important, to the collaborative process that enabled these diverse companies to participate.

The results of ABIEC's Career Advancement Project, consequently were several:

- The CAP training manual is the heart of a sophisticated model program for employee career development.
- Career planning workshops were conducted on a pilot basis for 60 employees in three corporations. The success of these workshops led to requests for more workshops from employees at the pilot corporations and at other employers. A "train the trainers" seminar prepared HRD staff of eleven other Phoenix area companies to use the Career Advancement Project workbooks. Direct, useful services to adult learners demonstrated the value of the CAP model, the appropriateness of the manual's design, and the importance of the collaborative process in developing the thinking built into the manual.
- The quality of career planning materials available to Phoenix area employers was improved by combining best practices and ideas. Committees of training, education, and human resource staff developed, critiqued, and produced a final product of a quality and at a cost simply not available to any single firm working on its own.
- Substantial satisfaction with the collaborative process used by ABIEC improved the adult career development "system." The focus on greater access to in-house career development services and on community college resources grew from the employer participants and was reinforced by the favorable employee reception of the pilot workshops.

- o Credibility for ABIEC's efforts on this project generated recognition for ABIEC as a creative force in promoting collaboration among education and work institutions. The project encouraged ABIEC to market CAP as widely as possible. With wide acceptance, CAP could become a source of revenue for ABIEC.

- o More firms are contacting community colleges for assistance on employee training, and more employees appear to be enrolling in local community colleges.

All this said, another observation is essential to a proper understanding of the Phoenix project: It is doubtful, for a number of reasons, whether seed funding for this collaborative process and its useful product would have been provided by the benefitting organizations. ABIEC is now successfully marketing the product of collaboration. Several firms had purchased the CAP materials by early 1985. But foundation funding was necessary to make the product possible.

ABIEC had no surplus capital of its own to invest in the project. Indeed the stimulus for thinking about a collaborative approach to employee career development came from the grant competition for the Kellogg-funded Adult Learners Project.

Who Is ABIEC?

What kind of organization was able to pull these resources together?

The Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council (ABIEC) was formed in 1960 and incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1965. With a founding leadership that included Arizona's then Governor, ABIEC's Board of Diectors has consistently attracted state and local business and political leaders. Viewing its role as a liaison between business and education, ABIEC sees as its mission: "to strengthen our educational and American free enterprise system by intensifying a dynamic partnership between business/industry and education communities."

In the process of fulfilling this mission ABIEC maintains contacts with over 400 Phoenix area companies, most secondary and postsecondary education

institutions, labor unions, and government agencies. During 1983-84, ABIEC activities served about 8,000 people each year on an annual budget of about $60,000 per year and a permanent staff of three persons. About 70 percent of the annual budget comes from membership dues, the remainder from special project grants and scholarships for student participants in ABIEC seminars.

ABIEC's diverse project activities emphasize personal contact and dialog between business people and students and educators: seminars, conferences, open-house discussions, speakers, tours, internships.

Over the years, the most visible program run by ABIEC has been the annual four-day Free Enterprise Institute for Young Americans. This is an Arizona-wide meeting of student and business leaders during the summer at a university campus. The emphasis has long been on programs aimed at high school students, secondary school teachers, and school superintendents.

Thus the Adult Learner Project was both a departure from ABIEC's established style and a natural extension of its interests in improving career information and education-employer communication.

San Mateo, California

The Older Workers Transition Project of the San Mateo County Industry Education Council represented a substantial shift in direction for this local member of the Industry Education Council of California (IECC). The Council's participation in the Kellogg-NIWL Adult Learner Project during 1983-84 was an exploratory effort to better understand the economic and education needs of retirees and older workers.

San Mateo County lies directly south of San Francisco between the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay. Its rapid economic growth is stimulated by the expansion of San Francisco International Airport. As jobs are created, would some of them be filled by older workers and retirees looking for part-time and full

time employment?

Some on the Council saw opportunities to help employers and older workers match employee and employer needs. What information, training, counseling, and program development assistance should or could be provided by education institutions? The project also was an exploratory effort by the Industry Education Council of California, based in nearby Burlingame, whose staff helped prepare the proposal and provided assistance during the project. The IECC wanted the project to identify education-work issues affecting older workers throughout California. The IECC also wanted to explore older worker activities which might be appropriate for the agendas of local industry-education councils.

The IECC chose the San Mateo Council for this effort for three basic reasons. First, Dr. Robert L. Bennett, the Council's vice president for program development, was on the faculty of the College of San Mateo. Experienced in the field of education-work collaboration, Bennett was able to pursue a variety of opportunities on behalf of both the Council and the College while having credibility with seniors, employers and community leaders. Second, the College was already involved in a number of projects either serving older learners or applicable to older workers. The opportunities for further program development appeared to be strong. Third, San Mateo County includes the statewide IECC's own offices in Burlingame. Technical assistance from IECC to the San Mateo Council could be provided more readily than to a more distant site.

During the project's 18 months, the Council used its limited funds to pursue the following tasks:

- Reviewed employment research and forecasts for the San Francisco Bay area to identify occupations with substantial growth prospects. Information on expected expansion of services, retail trade, manufacturing and other occupations was gathered for use both in counseling older workers and in developing project activities.

- Career information for several hundred seniors was provided to a College of San Mateo faculty member who conducts a regular lecture series for

senior citizens on finance, health, nutrition, and other subjects. Employment had not been a discussion topic previously. As Dr. Bennett recalled, "The single most important thing we discovered was that many seniors are desperate for money. They worry about money and think they can't earn much money." Financial insecurity appears to be a major concern for at least half of older workers and seniors in the county.

- o A similar lecture and discussion series was organized for a group of about 30 older workers being laid off or placed on early retirement by four major employers (including a bank, an oil company, and an airline) in the county.

- o Career counseling was provided to six older workers from an automobile assembly plant. The College of San Mateo had a contract with the State of California's Employment and Training Panel (using federal job training funds) to retrain and place these and other auto workers as microwave technicians. The counseling assisted these older workers in overcoming fears of age bias in training and hiring. Moreover, the college's overall training project demonstrated that special training techniques are not required for older workers.

- o Similar results were found in discussions with older workers participating in the College's self-instructional learning laboratory. Technical subjects are taught using microcomputer-based video-disc systems. Older workers displayed high motivation and great satisfaction with this individualized approach.

- o Also successful were efforts to integrate older worker issues into the agenda of the College of San Mateo. On campus, the project operated under the auspices of the Center on Business Technology, of which Dr. Bennett is the director. As a result of the project, Dr. Bennett foresees greater efforts by the College to recruit older learners, greater interest in working with area employers on older worker issues, and better understanding of program design issues encouraging older worker participation and success in learning. The big question mark: resources for development and operation of older worker programs.

- o Less successful were efforts to integrate older worker issues into the agenda of the San Mateo Industry Education Council. In-school youth (the next generation of new employees) are the Council's prime audience. Promoting cooperation and communication between area businesses and education agencies, with an emphasis on career information and exploration for in-school youth, is the Council's primary mode of operation. Lacking resources to launch a major adult learner project, and lacking the motivation of Council members to shift their attention to older workers, the Council did not choose to pursue the issues raised by the local Older Workers Transition Project.

Who Is the San Mateo Industry Education Council?

The San Mateo Industry Education Council was formed in 1981 as an affiliate of the Industry Education Council of California (IECC). Using the IECC networks

of business, education, government, and labor leaders involved in the activities of the state and other local councils, the IECC staff identified local leaders interested in collaborative ways of addressing youth transition problems.

During the Adult Learner Project, the Council consisted of about 65 dues paying members. Dues are relatively modest, providing about $3,000 of an annual budget of about $30-$50,000 in recent years. During 1984 there were about 40 business members, 20 education members, six government members and one labor member. Business members tend to be presidents of smaller firms and plant managers or personnel managers of larger firms. Educators include school superintendents, principals, other senior high school and community college administrators. The single labor representative is executive secretary of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council.

The Council has volunteer officers. Staff assistance is provided by the IECC central office.

The Council holds monthly morning business meetings and quarterly open meetings to review Council projects and build contacts. The Council's overall budget varies with the number of funded projects and is supplemented by substantial volunteer efforts. Recent projects include:

- Fashion Island Mall Merchandising Project: providing merchandising, retail occupations instruction, and job placement for youth in coordination with school curriculum skill training.
- Food and Hospitality Industry Project: providing career and work experience learning with firms providing ancillary services to the San Mateo County Airport.
- Community Resource Clearinghouse: facilitating employer-education relationship through classroom speakers, worksite visits, shadowing, work experience, teacher worksite tours, internships, teacher summer employment, and equipment gifts.
- Math/Science Computer Project: participating as a local site in an IECC statewide project encouraging business school collaboration to encourage and support improved science and math instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area

Sponsorship by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) provided the Metropolitan Washington Work Education Council (MWWEC) several unique advantages. COG was itself a long-established, well-respected consortium of city and county governments with a wide range of research, information, and program coordination responsibilities. COG leaders and staff were in regular contact with a wide range of government, business, education, and community leaders and organizations. Organizationally the COG staff were experienced in organizing and conducting research and meetings of the type at the heart of the Work Education Council's adult learner project.

The Council's project aimed "to improve linkages between high technology education and training resources and employment and economic development efforts." Growth of the Washington suburbs as a site for research and development of advanced, highly engineered products was rapidly changing the metropolitan area from one with a central federal government, business and cultural hub to one with a complex network of intellectual, financial and employment centers. Rich in engineering and other professional talent, the region, some felt, was reaching a point where lack of human resources could limit future growth. Rich in educational institutions, the region, some felt, had neglected to think about how educational, human, and business resources could be better linked to reinforce the strengths that clearly existed.

The Council, or rather both councils—COG and the MWWEC—intended to use the Kellogg-NIWL Adult Learner Project to direct the attention of area leaders to these collaborative opportunities.

In the final result, the project produced a conference and a series of reports dealing with education-work linkages shaping the region's response to technological change. Perhaps more importantly, the project anticipated and in

part stimulated a blossoming of interest in the issues during 1983 and 1984. Early interviews clearly revealed that the need for coordinated thinking about education, training and economic development planning was central to the interests of area business, education, and government leaders. The Council's project found responsive chords everywhere. Thus the Council's April 1984 public Forum attracted the Governor of Virginia, the Mayor of Washington, college presidents, and business chief executive officers.

But the Council also discovered the difficulties of "getting a handle" on these dynamic issues. Many organizations were interested in partnerships for high technology leadership. Many of them had vested interests, missions, and resources more closely identified with these issues than were those of either COG or the Work Education Council. Much was happening within the respective jurisdictions and among the various organizations. Central information sharing and formal coordination were recognized needs, but financial support for these functions was not forthcoming. Information was generally available to those that looked for it. Coordination, never the purpose of the project, was not a high priority among competing jurisdictions. Other groups, such as the business-sponsored Washington/Baltimore Regional Association with its emphasis on economic development and the Board of Trade, were better positioned to develop industry-education collaboration initiatives linking education and economic development issues raised by the WEC-COG project.

Thus the Council's major contribution was as a catalyst for discussion and issue raising which benefitted the area as a whole.

Who Is the Metropolitan Washington Work Education Council?

For several years prior to August 1981, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments had explored ways to focus the attention of its member jurisdictions on the problems of youth unemployment, training, and education. In

establishing that summer the Metropolitan Washington Work Education Council, COG hoped that the new council would address issues of labor market information, career exploration, work experience, and private sector involvement in youth transition activities from both regional and local perspectives. The initial focus was on secondary schools and teenage youth.

Initial funding in 1981-82 came from the District of Columbia's Department of Employment Services. During 1982 the MWWEC assisted the D.C. Public Schools in designing a centralized Career Placement Center for the school system and provided the District's Private Industry Council with a survey and directory of public and private employment training programs for youth in the Washington area.

The first chairperson of the Council was the D.C. School's Coordinator for Career Education. She was succeeded by the vice president for government and community affairs of a local bank. Staff support for the WEC was provided by COG.

The disadvantage of these early arrangements was that the Council quickly became identified as a low visibility organization with a special interest in projects serving the District of Columbia rather than COG's broad constituency of 16 local governments. Moreover, the WEC's agenda, influenced directly by the source, size, and type of available funding, was absorbed in relatively small projects serving public sector youth agencies with little role for employers.

The Kellogg/NIWL Adult Learner Project was an opportunity for COG and the Work Education Council to again broaden the mission and focus of the Council to larger education-work, public-private sector issues having a direct impact on career opportunities for youth throughout the region. The dichotomy between the relatively narrow and broad visions of the Council's proper mission and projects persisted, however, throughout the Adult Learner Project. With no other sources of funding than the Kellogg-NIWL project, the effect of this dichotomy was to leave the Work Education Council almost exclusively interested in District youth

issues (but lacking the clout to lead the way) and a COG staff doing everything necessary to assure the success of the Adult Learner project on technology, education, training and employment. Lacking funding and the ability to develop and pursue its agenda, the Metropolitan Work-Education Council was disbanded in Fall 1984, a few months following its completion of the Adult Learner Project.

III. LEVERAGE AND LEADERSHIP

When the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments found that the Board of Trade was interested in co-sponsoring its regional forum on "The Challenge of Changing Technology," COG had found a handle to help it add to its constituent base of local political and economic development leaders, the attention of business executives, and media editors in the Washington area. Identifying the interests of other organizations, and using those interests and resources to gain greater visibility and impact for one's own actions is what leverage is all about.

Leverage is a type of social and political exchange. Just as COG gained visibility and access with new audiences, so the Greater Washington Board of Trade gained credibility with its constituencies by being seen as a leader on an issue of significant interest to local, state, and national policy makers. The Kellogg project enabled COG to anticipate and stimulate the public appetite for information on technology and collaborative education programs with industry. By giving other organizations an opportunity to share the limelight and be recognized as leaders, COG created a situation in which participants and sponsors all used leverage to enhance their stature in the eyes of their peers.

Similarly The Arizona Business Industry Education Council in Phoenix could never have purchased the professional energies that went into the creation of Directions. On the other hand local corporations would not have produced that career planning workbook if ABIEC staff had not initiated discussions with them.

It took outside stimulus to make key Phoenix employers (already headed in the same direction, but doing so in isolation from one another) recognize their common need for career planning materials tailored to working adults. ABIEC and its staff, in turn, needed the opportunity, direction, and modest financial resources of the Adult Learner Project in order to initiate those discussions. "Leverage" describes the generic process used by ABIEC to parlay a small amount of resources into a large effort whose total budget of donated professional time and materials far exceeded the initial project investment.

Leverage, says the dictionary, is "positional advantage, the power to act effectively." It is the ability to use one set of resources to generate support from other sets of resources. Leverage may be a common political technique, but substantial skill and luck are needed to use it in significant ways. Little is gained from a dead-end project that does its job and disappears with no lasting effect. The ability to gain leverage on other resources is a sign at least of acceptance by others and possibly of being able to make an important difference.

Leadership in these projects consists in good part in looking for and creating opportunities to achieve desired project results through effective uses of leverage. In a number of ways, with different degrees of success, each of the Adult Learner projects was able to use the modest Kellogg grants as a lever to raise other resources and to achieve otherwise unattainable results.

Essentially, the leverage they used was of three types: people, organizations, and monies. Effective use of these three levers enabled councils to create momentum which carried their messages and activities beyond the formal lives of their Kellogg-NIWL projects.

People Leverage

Advertisers know it pays to associate a product with a well-known and presumably respected name. The movie star knows nothing about cars or soaps or

politics. Yet the "star" brings attention, presumably favorable attention, to the product. People can provide leverage in a number of ways: through the use of their names, personal representation at events, opening access to other organizations and networks, participating in key decisions, and participating in activities.

In any collaborative project, people are truly the most valuable resource. Not all or any people, of course. People with ideas, contacts, and authority over other resources are indispensable sources of leverage. Goals, agendas, and tasks come from them. Some people are the organizers of effective, memorable projects. Their assistance makes a project look good and leads to other important projects. Identifying these people, knowing their strengths and weaknesses, is crucial to any collaborative council and its projects. Their opposites, one can say, are the misjudgments and unreliability of other people, the human factors that take the steam out of the council's engines.

The local collaborative councils in the Adult Worker Project used people leverage in a number of ways. Name leverage is almost a magician's trick: the person is there but not there. The names of leading citizens on a council's letterhead and official documents as directors' and officers set a tone for an organization. To someone who knows little about an organization, the willingness of a respected local leader to be associated with the organization is a vote of confidence. Even twenty-five years after its founding in 1960, for example, the Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council still makes significant use of the fact that a former Arizona Senator and Governor was instrumental in the formation of the Council while serving as Governor. Some councils ask persons of local or regional stature to join a Board of Directors. Others select as honorary members respected persons who have shown an interest in education-work collaboration but who are not expected to serve actively on the Council.

Representation leverage is another way of using people-power to a council's advantage. Simply by appearing at meetings, conferences, workshops, classrooms, hearings, and other public events on behalf of the council is an important way of strengthening the council's credibility and the credibility of its agenda. As a new organization seeking visibility and credibility for itself and its advocacy of education partnerships with business and industry, for example, the Metropolitan Washington Work Education Council co-sponsored and organized a public forum as the principal activity of its Adult Learner project. The governor of Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, several college and university presidents and corporate chief executive officers were major speakers. Their presence could not have been purchased, yet went a long way to validate the importance and timeliness of the council's agenda.

Access leverage refers to the willingness of council members and other people supporting the council's goals to assist the council and its staff in gaining access to the resources of other organizations. Such assistance may be in the form of introductions to key people, arranging a speaking engagement, writing a letter of endorsement for a council proposal, writing a cover letter of invitation to a meeting or for a council questionnaire. Access is crucial to the effectiveness of any council activity. The willingness of individuals to lead their own credibility to the council's initiatives weights the balance toward success.

In Phoenix and Contra Costa counties, employer representatives provided special access to their organizations for pilot testing of workshop materials or detailed review of employee data.

Decision leverage represents a still greater degree of commitment to council goals. Individuals who participate directly or indirectly in the process of setting a council's goals and agenda are likely to feel some sense of commitment

to the fulfillment of those goals. Even a simple interview by a council member or staff person who is gathering initial facts about a particular topic is likely to make the interviewee curious about the analysis and conclusions presented by the council. This was the case in the Corning, New York, area, where the Career Development Council first interviewed supervisors, workers, managers, and union leaders to assess the extent of worker anticipation of and preparation for career changes. The survey laid the groundwork for subsequent council communications with these people. In this way the council was able to broaden the base of community interest in the topic well beyond the formal board of directors. This base-broadening tactic not only led to a more vigorous discussion but also reinforced the legitimacy of the council's leadership and of the topic of worker career planning.

Activity leverage is yet another way, probably the most time intensive, of using people to extend the reach of the council and accomplish its goals. Obviously one central activity is participation on the council's board of directors of other executive groups setting direction and managing the council's affairs. Actual participation in the council's activities can be shared by members and non-members alike. The Industry Education Council of California (IECC) has for many years used loaned executives from leading California corporations to assist local councils in project completion. The IECC assisted the San Mateo Industry Education Council in this way by identifying a project consultant who was herself an early retiree. Volunteers can do many different jobs. In the Kellogg/NIWL Adult Learner projects the single most active use of volunteers was as contributors to the development of the employee career development manual prepared by the Arizona Business Industry Education Council. Here people devoted many hours of hard work drafting materials, discussing and reviewing alternative approaches to career planning instruction, and lending their

expertise to the creation of a product. They made this contribution even though the primary identification of the publication would be not with themselves or their companies but rather with ABIEC.

Organizational leverage

Collaborative councils describe themselves as "neutral turfs," that is, small organizations that can serve as honest brokers between the vested interests of other community institutions. Different employers, unions, post-secondary education institutions, and local governments each have a particular perspective on the needs of adult learners, the responsibilities of varius institutions (including themselves), and the ways and resources to achieve solutions. An effective collaborative council would be able to identify a topic of recognizable importance, gather information necessary to make key facts visible and understandable, find ways to conduct rational discussions about the ends and the facts, and help the various institutions find ways to accommodate their interests in the best interests of adults and the community at large.

The essential purpose of local collaborative councils, therefore, is to influence the ways other organizations behave. Whether the topic be career education for junior and senior high school students, transition to work for high school and college graduates and their prospective employers, adult worker education and training, or older worker career development and transitions, lasting improvements in any of these areas can result only from complementary changes within a community's principal education, employment, and public policy organizations.

Because local councils have no formal authority or powers to command participation, they must constantly discover ways to engage these other organizations in considering how they can help themselves and others through self-initiated institutional change. This process of engaging the interests of other

organizations and using their self-motivated participation in council activities to create positive changes benefiting learners and organizations constitutes the idea of organizational leverage.

The five local councils in the Adult Learner Project all used organizational leverage in a number of ways. In Washington, D.C., the Council of Governments (COG) saw the Adult Learner Project as a way to strengthen relationships with the Board of Trade, the leading business group. GOG recognized that co-sponsorship of its proposed forum on high technology and education would serve the interests of both organizations. As the parent body of the new Work Education Council, COG also hoped that some of the credit and credibility flowing from the event would enable the Work Education Council to expand its membership and further develop its agenda, its contacts, and its funded projects. From an immediate viewpoint, sponsorship by the three organizations — COG, the Board of Trade, and the Work Education Council — would introduce the new Council as a potential partner of the two well-established organizations. Yet it was the co-sponsorship by COG and the Board of Trade which would attract leading speakers, attendees, and the media.

A primary purpose of the project initiated by the Contra Costa County Industry Edcation Council in California was to increase awareness among educators, young adults, and employer groups of the important career development opportunities represented by corporate tuition assistance programs. The cooperation of area employers was essential. Like the Washington and Corning councils, the Contra Costa IEC used a survey to make contact with a wide variety of employers, familiarizing them with the council and inviting their participation in the project. From the 72 companies responding to the mailed questionnaire the IEC was able to collect a significant amount of information about the design and utilization of local corporate tuition aid programs. Although local patterns of tuition aid availability and use were typical of patterns found in national

studies, the crucial fact was that the IEC was the first organization to collect this information locally and the first to direct local leadership attention to the organization and underutilization of these programs. This fact-finding and its presentation in a published report provided the basis for subsequent council activities, including: a working conference of thirty-five area educators, business representatives, and union members; a more detailed follow-up survey of six companies to assess the impact of tuition assistance programs on employee performance; and a series of recommendations and activities growing out of three collaborative committees established at the working conference.

In the Contra Costa example, organizational leverage can be seen in two basic ways. First, as in Arizona, the council engaged the attention and voluntary energies of representatives from many business, labor, and education organizations. The voluntarism enabled the council to gather and publish data on corporate tuition assistance programs, to serve as an honest broker of information between community organizations, and to draw on the views and needs expressed at their meetings to develop the council's own agenda in ways endorsed by the participating organizations.

Secondly, through the committees established at the council's conference, local support was developed for a proposal, eventually funded, that enabled the Contra Costa Private Industry Council to receive State JTPA funding to establish a Computerized Inventory of Occupational Training. Thus the council's activities were leveraged into related projects conducted by other organizations benefitting the county.

In his search for examples of the problems and learning needs encountered by older workers, the project director of the San Mateo Industry Education Council "piggy-backed" his questions and exploration on projects being implemented by other organizations. As a faculty member at the College of San Mateo with easy

access to other faculty, he was able to persuade one colleague to include employment-related discussions and information in a series of lecture-seminars for area "elders." When the college received major funding from the California Employment and Training Panel for a retraining program for displaced auto workers, he was able to build in a special segment of counseling and interviewing of older workers.

In this instance the local council simply used opportunities made available through other projects. "Piggy-back leverage" of organizational resources can be even more effective when the smaller project becomes a catalyst for the reshaping of larger programs to employ the concepts and issues of the smaller project.

Money and Leverage from Other Resources

Collaboration costs money. The costs can range from the petty cash needed for phones, copying, and local travel to the not-so-petty expenses such as for staff, consultants, and proposal writing, and more distant travels and meetings. No matter how glamorous the goals and achievements of a project, money also serves an essential if mundane purpose: that of involving and possibly employing people who would otherwise be doing something else. Given the open-ended goals of many collaborative projects and the modest financial resources typically available, the search for ways to strengthen budgets is a nearly constant preoccupation of council staff and officers.

Contingency funding is the most direct way to leverage additional capital. Foundations frequently use contingency funding as a way of sharing the costs and risks of project sponsorship. The concept is simple: a promise is made to fund time portion of a project if matching funds of a certain amount can be secured from one or more other sources. The project commences when a minimum operational budget is attained.

A variation on this theme is the "bird in hand" strategy where the recipient

of a grant or contract approaches other prospective funders with the argument that one good grant deserves another. With a first phase funded and en route to realization, the project operator seeks to persuade the funder that further funds are needed to arrive at the project's full significance, that progress has revealed another level of serious problems not heretofore recognized, or that progress has been exemplary and that expansion is now the order of the day.

Once funded and in operation, a project provides another type of money leverage: time to talk to funding agencies, to develop marketing plans capitalizing on new expertise or products, and to develop new concepts and proposals. Collaborative approaches to planning, proposal writing and subsequent projects build on the multilateral relationships being created through the current project.

Follow-on projects and funding were never far from the minds of the directors of local Adult Learner projects. Project continuity, organizational continuity, and personal career continuity provide adequate motivation for leveraging activities where money is concerned.

In Phoenix, the Career Advancement Project (CAP) took the Arizona Business-Industry Education Council in a direction it had not foreseen. Initially the main focus of the project was to facilitate adult career development in the Phoenix area by strengthening company-college programs, emphasizing the use of tuition assistance programs as a financial building block for career planning and program development. When discussions with area employers identified the more pressing need for training materials on employee career development, the development of those materials became the main focus of the project. So enthusiastic was the employer response to the completed project that the Council developed a pricing structure for use of the materials by firms not involved in the project. The ABIEC executive board decided that any further development and dissemination of

the workshop and materials would have to be on a self-sustaining basis. Preparation of a tentative marketing plan raised the possibility that sales of the workshop could become a source of funds as well as visibility and credibility for the council.

In Corning, New York, the surveys, discussions, meetings, and publications of the Career Development Council's adult learning initiative led local business, education, and labor leaders to urge the council to seek local funding from the area's Private Industry Council (PIC). At the end of the project a proposal was submitted by the Career Development Council to establish a three-county career and training information and referral system. The system would include a telephone hotline, a series of localized bulletin boards of current and up-coming training opportunities, and a bi-weekly training bulletin on the activities of all education, training, and career counseling providers in the region. If funded, such a project would establish the council as a local point for adult learning planning in the region and as a successful broker of information and technical assistance on career planning matters.

In the Washington, D.C. area, the Adult Learner funds were able to leverage the project budget in several ways: the Greater Washington Board of Trade provided financing for a reception at the end of the forum, five area corporations provided financial donations to assist in reducing forum expenses, and area local governments financed the preparation of conference proceedings; the sales of which also produced additional revenue. Additionally, the University of Maryland agreed to sponsor three tuition-free slots for area high school students at a day-long high technology symposium.

During the project efforts were made to define future funding and a continuing role for the Work Education Council. For example, a proposal was submitted to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to build on

the recommendations and achievements of the forum. The proposal was not successful. A series of post-forum interviews resulted in some private sector interest in providing financial support. But the level of funding necessary to sustain an on-going staff function was not forthcoming. The desired goal of enhancing networking among educators and high-tech employers was achieved.

However, delivery of programs and services on a tri-state basis was politically infeasible at the time. The principal positive leveraging accomplished through the forum was the visibility and stimulus it provided for many unique collaborative arrangements among employers and educators on a subregional basis in the Washington Metropolitan Area. But the council's own difficulties in finding the regional "glue" to connect these pieces resulted in its demise.

Projects with modest budgets can be used to leverage non-cash resources of equal value. In Arizona, ABIEC used donated office space, enabling the Council to use cash for direct program activities. Part of COG's support for the Metropolitan Work-Education Council consisted of office space, partial staff support, financial management, general administrative support, and planning support worth about $30,000 over two years. This comprehensive assistance enabled the council to meet and plan. Outside resources — such as the Kellogg-NIWL grant — were needed to implement any activities targeted by the council. In-kind assistance on such a thorough scale is not typical of collaborative councils. Case by case negotiation of support for specific projects is more frequent: the printing of a brochure or publication, the use of a conference room for a meeting, the assistance of a loaned executive, the use of computer time to tabulate a survey.

Momentum

Building an adult learner network in any community, large or small sophisticated or not, requires intensive and expert use of all the sources of leverage and leadership present in the community and beyond its borders. No where is it written that one success will lead to another. The connections from one moment to another must be specially tailored to fit the conditions and personalities on hand.

The tools of momentum are the meetings, documents, contacts, and information flows necessary to the performance of any project. A best effort in the current activity sets the stage to move people and organizations on to the next round of questions, concerns, motivations, resources, and actions. Knowing how and when and why to use these tools tests intuition and experience as well as leadership capabilities.

Developing momentum for adult learning in any community also must take account of the strength and direction of the forces already favoring adult education and career development. Because of the general strength, diversity, and accessibility of American colleges, universities, and other providers of knowledge and skills, there is a tendency to believe that adult learning is already well integrated into American society. In some urban centers the pervasiveness of formal and informal learning opportunities is extraordinary. Museums, clubs, religious organizations, professional associations, open universities, Y's, hospitals, athletic clubs, and recreational organizations provide more outlets for learning then a working adult can comprehend much less utilize. Most people assume that the opportunities exist and that the responsibility, credit, and blame for use or non-use of these opportunities rests with the individual. Yet we know relatively little on a community by community basis about the people who do not use these myriad opportunities, or about the quality of career and life planning

that goes into current levels of utilization. And the experience of the collaborative councils in the Adult Learner Project suggests that the institutions most directly responsible for the educational and economic life of the nation have little sustained contact with each other.

In such an environment the first task of a collaborative council frequently is to educate the leaders of education and work organizations that a problem exists in the lack of connection between education and employment institutions and that whole populations of adults are not being served as a result. Awareness of this problem and some of its specific consequences is not really lacking. The evidence is everywhere yet hidden. But the desire to address the disconnections has been suppressed by many other daily tasks and by the lack of a clamoring constituency of adult non-learners demanding change. Invariably the ideas and facts provided by the local councils touch responsive chords among the business, labor, education, and other community leaders involved in these projects. Where an organization such as the council was ready to provide leadership others were willing to follow. Less probable, however, was the readiness of communities to organize themselves to take on the responsibility of addressing adult learner issues once the councils had spent their limited resources.

Searching for a formula to shape and direct these emerging consciousnesses can be said to have been the essence of the Adult Learner Project.

IV. LOCAL COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS FOR ADULT LEARNERS: SCENARIO AND PROPOSITION

In Adult Learners: Key to the Nation's Future, the Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner (1984) identified three basic types of impediments blocking improvements in the nation's adult learning system. These impediments are: institutional barriers, particularly the barriers of traditional mission and organizational processes within colleges and universities themselves; inadequate

funding, including funds for program development and innovation, and funds for tuition expenses of unemployed and low-income employed adult learners with no access to employment-based tuition assistance programs; and lack of awareness of the needs of adult learners and of the importance of adult learning to the economic and social welfare of the nation.

The Commission also identified five components of a program to reduce these impediments. The components identified were: public commitment to adult learning, federal government funding and program innovation, state leadership in the reorientation of higher education toward services for adult learners, institutional changes within postsecondary education institutions themselves, and, fifth, collaboration and cost-sharing among the education, business, labor, and government sectors.

Does there exist now a constituency of interests sufficiently strong to successfully advocate and have implemented specific programs built upon these basic principles of change in adult learning services?

One premise of the Adult Learning Project sponsored from 1980 to 1984 by the National Institute for Work and Learning and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation was that the development of a national constituency for adult learners will require stronger, more sustained examples of local collaboration. These examples will make adult learner issues more visible, demonstrate the feasibility and value of collaborative problem-solving and action, and through such action build the recognition, trust, accountability, and experience needed to form an effective coalition. A national coalition, in other words, is best built upon the foundation of strong local networks of leaders knowledgeable about and involved in projects and concepts dedicated to the improvement of adult learner services.

What did the Adult Project teach us about the need for and feasibility of local networks? The evidence was both encouraging and discouraging, depending

upon one's perspective. Of foremost importance is a realistic assessment of the standing of adult learner concerns in proportion to the many issues competing for the time and attention of local education, business, labor, and government leaders. For these leaders, adult learner issues are new, gaining in importance, but hardly a major factor in their daily concerns.

In each of the ten project communities, five in Phase I and another five in Phase II, the activities of the local collaborative council, modestly funded as they were, filled a vacuum of leadership on community-wide collaboration. In each community, of course, can be found community and senior colleges providing substantial and frequently exemplary services to employers and adult learners. And of course, many other counseling, education and training services are available. It is this apparent wide availability of services and healthy institutions dedicated to those services, that lulls most institutional leaders into believing all is well or nearly well with programs for adult learners.

Yet in each case the local council initiated and completed important tasks and projects requiring multi-sector action which simply would not have been initiated but for the council's project. In each case the council brought together people who had met together before yet who were essential to the development of adult learner networks and local problem-solving. In each case the concern was voiced that institutions were isolated from each other and, consequently, were not able to fulfill their responsibilities to adult learners. And in each case, the ability of local communities to provide adequate financial support for the continuation of their council's adult learner initiatives was either lacking or minimal.

The vanguard or pioneer nature of these projects must be recognized. The results, the meetings, publications, fact-finding, and services, were entirely consistent with the funding provided. Indeed, because of the substantial

contributions of in-kind and volunteer services, the results in most cases exceeded what might be expected from 18-month projects with budgets of $20,000 each. The keys to performance were, first, dedicated and high quality staff work, and second, the unpaid voluntary involvement of business, education, and union representatives. In some instances the members of the councils themselves were actively involved; in other instances council members were only marginally involved, leaving the work to staff and volunteers.

In all cases, the identification of the Adult Learner Project with a local collaborative council provided the legitimacy, the neutrality, and the organizational identification needed to bring people together to work and talk in a more honest and objective fashion than was normally the case.

The experience of the Adult Learner Project appears to indicate the existence of a gap between understanding and commitment in the ways community leaders in many American communities view the problems of adult learning. People seem to understand the problems of adult learners once those problems are brought to their attention. People seem to recognize the eventual necessity of multi-institutional collaboration as the proper approach to the solution of adult learner problems, once the techniques and opportunities for collaboration are brought to their attention. But the patterns of collaboration are not ingrained in the viewpoints of institutional leaders nor in the ways people in their organizations define and attack problems.

Thus the needs of adult learners in the United States wait on one of two courses: either these needs must fester into large more critical problems obvious to all, or stimulus from the outside must be applied in ways which anticipate necessary change and build a greater capability for institutional teamwork than now exists.

Scenario

More substantial examples of local collaborative networks serving adult learners are needed across the nation. These local networks must demonstrate the effectiveness of collaborative efforts serving adult learners. They must be able to gather information, articulate issues and proposed solutions, generate institutional support, and guide the implementation of innovative programs. As was true with the Adult Learner Project, a variety of issues will be emphasized. These will include adult literacy, adult career development, education and retraining for industrial and managerial workers, improved labor market information and counseling services, better coordination of area economic development and education and training resources, career development assistance for disadvantaged young adults, and programs building cooperative relationships between labor and management, among others. Local priorities and timing will vary. But from these local examples and the leadership experiences that they provide will come a clearer formulation of local, state, and nationwide issues and coalitions and a clearer sense of how national and state action can support local needs and initiatives.

Proposition

The Adult Learner Project ought to viewed as itself a pilot project for a larger, more sustained national project involving 25 to 50 communities over a five or six year period. During the next decade adult learner issues will come of age in the United States. The past decade's turmoil of growth in postsecondary continuing education programs, in corporate in-house training and tuition assistance programs, and in labor union concerns for career development, must find expression in new ways of linking the resources of all those institutions.

Receptive to change yet cautious about the ways to implement changes, aware of problems in adult career development and learning yet unclear about the allocation of responsibilities in addressing those problems, the nation's communities and their leaders would welcome assistance intended to help them use local collaborative councils to sort out the many possibilities for partnership projects and more constructive planning to better meet the growing needs of adult learners.

Local Councils and Their Adult Learner Projects (1982-1984)

- Contra Costa County, California

  Industry Education Council of Contra Costa County (IEC-CCC)
  200 Harriet Drive
  Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
  Tel: (415) 680-8744

  Project Title: Employment-Based Tuition Aid for Expanding Adult Opportunities
  IEC Director: Donna Walton
  Project Directors: Webster Wilson
  Donna Walton

- Corning-Elmira Area, New York
  Career Development Council (CDC)
  201 Cantigny Street
  Corning, New York 14830
  Tel: (607) 962-4601

  Project Title: Adult Worker Regeneration
  CDC Director: David Youst, Anne S. Mazar
  Project Director: David Youst

- Phoenix Metropolitan Area, Arizona
  Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council (ABIEC)
  4350 East Camelback, Suite 140C
  Phoenix, Arizona 85018
  Tel: (602) 840-0784

  Project Title: Career Advancement Program
  ABIEC Director: Janet Beauchamp
  Project Director: Sally Shaefer

- San Mateo County, California

  San Mateo County Industry Education Council (SMIEC)
  c/o 1575 Old Bayshore Highway
  Suite 106
  Burlingame, CA 94010
  Tel: (415) 697-4311 (Industry-Education Council of California)

  Project Title: Easing Retirees Into Employment/Activity Options
  Project Director: Robert L. Bennett

- Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area

  Metropolitan Washington Work Education Council
  Metropolitan Washington Council of Gov' nments
  1875 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 200
  Washington, D.C. 20006
  Tel: (202) 223-6800

  Project Title: Improving Linkages Between Adult Vocational-Technical High-Tech Training Programs and Economic Development Efforts
  Project Director: Ruth Crone